THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN) (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Does not arise in view of (a) above. However, two regular courses viz. mate Fishing Vessel Course and Engine Driver Fishing Vessel Course of 18 months duration each are conducted by CIFNET for manning the large fishing vessels.

Farmers leaving agriculture

2596. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:
SHRI R.K. ANAND:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than 40 per cent farmers would like to quit agriculture business due to unsafe and low margin to agro-produce, water dependent production as well as unavailability of agriculture loan on lower percentage of interest rate in the country;

(b) if so, Government's views and reaction thereto; and

(c) the details of measures taken or proposed to be taken for improving the current unfavourable atmosphere in the agriculture by keeping in view the poor farmers of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA) (a) As per the 59th Round Survey Report of National Sample Survey Organisation submitted in July, 2005, 40 per cent of the farmer households to not like farming as a profession as they consider it unprofitable, risky, lacking social status etc. While 27 per cent of the farmer households consider agriculture being not profitable, 8 per cent consider it as a risky venture. Remaining 5 per cent dislike it for some other reasons, which also include lack of social status.

(b) and (c) The Government is seized of the problems being faced by the farmers. A number of measures have been taken by the Government to increase production and productivity in agricultur sector as also to raise the farm income by ensuring remunerative prices and thereby reasonable return to them. The measures, inter-alia, include easy and timely availability of institutional credit in a hassle free manner to the farmer at low rate of interest better risk management through implementation of crop insurance

scheme, strengthening of marketing and storage facilities, promotion of agricultural diversification towards income enhancing crops and activities suitable to small holdings, sustainable dry-land farming, subsidy and price support measures like announcement of Minimum Support Prices and organizing of purchase operations to prevent distress sales by the farmers.

A number of specific Schemes are being implemented for the benefit of farmers including small and marginal farmers. Prominent among these are National Horticulture Mission, Macro Management of Agricultural Scheme, Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM), Technology Mission on Cotton, Technology Mission on Coconut. Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States including Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal, Seed Village Scheme, Strengthening of Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure. Under these Scheme financial assistance is provided to the farmers. Besides, efforts are also on to cover larger areas under irrigation to reduce dependence on rain.

Shortfall in agricultural production

2597. SHRI RAASID ALVI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite upbeat projections, preliminary estimates shows that agriculture sector is already falling short of its crop production for July, 2005-June, 2006;

(b) if so, whether foodgrain target for that period is 215 million tonnes and kharif production 110 million tones but the first advance estimates puts it at 105.25 million tonnes;

(c) whether this will be marginally up from the last years but will be short of the target;

(d) if so, the details of the target set; and

(e) the steps taken to meet the foodgrain shortfall?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA) (a) and (b) For the country as a whole, the seasonal rainfall from 1st June to 30th September, 2005 was 99% of its Long Period Average (LPA). The normal rainfall implies a reasonable good kharif